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WATERS FROM AN OZARK SPRING

HOWARD L. TERRY

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"The rocks of old around it stand,
So rudely carved by the storm god's hand."

WATERS FROM AN OZARK SPRING

A Book of Verse

By

HOWARD L. TERRY

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TO MY WIFE

There is no earthly love but child for parent,
Parent for child—all else is human passion,
Dying like roses, tired of beauty;
And that which I call love for you, O wife,
Is pure devotion, thinking of you alway.

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PROEM

'Tis sweet, beneath the trees of evening shade,
When noisy day has ceased his merry sound,
To ponder on the parts thy hand has played,
For then the weary heart its joy has found;

And pleasant are the thoughts the evenings bring,
When from our toil we rest our weary feet,
Then, far away, it seems a voice does sing,
"The joy of finished labor, sure, is sweet."*

Have you not found it so, O weary heart?
When deeds well done the envious friend defied,
That, failing, sought to spoil the little part
Which you would play on earth before you died?

I know the joy, the rapture of the hour,
However humble though the task I did,
It was performed with all my innate power—
I could not have done better had God bid!

Oh, sweetest meed! the knowing we deserve
Reward that earthly splendors do not meet,—
Such things for empty souls a purpose serve—
But this is glory man cannot defeat.

---

*Finished labor is sweet.—*Horace.*

I've learned that which is termed the humblest
toil,
I've mingled with the merchants, and I
know
That he who lives near nature and the soil
Is he on whom God's sweetest blessings
flow.

My feet the furrow hour on hour have
traced,
My brow the sweat of honest toil has shed,
My weary limbs have slow and slower paced,
Until the dews of even 'round me spread;

I know the glory of a happy home!—
Alas! that home for me is now no more;
Oh, sad the day when from it I did roam!
Now sorrow swells the tears that trickle
o'er!

Cursed be the wickedness of modern wealth!
Cursed be the vampires of the humble
hearth!
And doubly cursed that power whose silent
stealth
Is blotting out the purest souls of earth.

Farewell, my home, my garden, and my
field—
Farewell, ye brutes, whose mutual love I
shared,
Farewell the joys that wholesome life did
yield—
'Tis Fate's decree that none of you be
spared.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

He lived in a world that was truly his own,—
In a world that was wonderous strange,
  And that world was his tome,
  And that tome was his home,
    In the sky—in the sky!
Where the stars of the firmament range.

His soul was a harp and it played for a world,
For a world that was heedless and cold;
  For the world had no ear,
  Or at least would not hear,
    Would not hear—did not know
Of what stuff was this wonderful mold.

His heart was a heart of a sensitive kind,—
In its depths was the well of his tears;
  'Twas the heart of a poet,
  But the world did not know it,
    Would not know—could not know
It was one that should conquer the years!

He lived in a world that was truly his own,
In a world which he fashioned himself,
  In a world he conceived,
  When this one deceived,
    Discouraged, deceived!
With its glitter, its falseness, its pelf.

'Tis th' world's fatal error—when Genius
      appears,
To know not the worth of the thing;
  With the past borne in mind,
  Still, still we were blind,

We were deaf—we were blind!
To this man taught by angels to sing!

"SUNSET"

I love my home, my cheery hearth,—
I love the true and good on earth,
And all that warms, and all that cheers,
And all that drives away our fears;
And her who does abide with me,
And these fair children on my knee,
And Him who blesses this dear home,
And guides my steps where'er I roam.

O, home! O, sweet composure!
When from the world's exposure,
Into thy welcoming rooms I go,
And feel the fire's bright, warming glow,
And greet the loved ones waiting near,
What bliss on earth is half so dear?

I often longed for other joys
When these would seem too tame,
And sought the scenes where gold decoys,
And makes or wrecks a name;
And joined the whirl of pleasure there
That mocked the fleeting hours,
Until this spot would seem as drear
As woods when winter lours;

But oh! the bliss on coming back,
And oh! the comfort here,
And oh! the music of the crack
Of greenwood burning near!

Let others tell of pleasures gay
That fade as they appear,
But none will ever come my way,
However far and wide I stray,
To fill my cup so full of cheer,
To nestle to my heart so dear,
As this sweet home I've builded here.

ELM SPRING

Below our farm a mile or so,
The Elm Spring's waters rise and flow;
By spreading elm and towering spruce
She turns her crystal waters loose.

Around about it cresses grow—
Above, the wooded violets blow,
The cowslips in the grasses stray—
And ever th' crystal waters play.

The rocks of old around it stand,
So rudely carved by th' storm god's hand,
And on their dripping side so cold—
The moss and lichen have taken hold.

'Tis there the cows from pastures near
Come to drink of th' waters clear,
And many a lover of solitude,
Has cheered his heart in the shady wood.

And ever th' crystal waters flow,
And ever happy lovers go—
And ever, ever warblers sing—
To happy hearts at th' Elm Spring.

THE LAST OAK OF SHERWOOD FOREST

"Strike me not, O, sturdy woodsman, while as yet I am not dead,
Centuries have rolled beneath me since I raised on earth my head,
And I stand a lonely monarch—for my race has passed away—
Looking on the stars at even and the busy world by day;
I have seen my comrades falling all around me, one by one,
So I ask you, leave me standing till my vital parts are run;
Then, when all my leaves have fallen, and my arms are hanging low,
And I feel no more the rain drop, or the winter's sturdy blow;
When my trunk is dry and splitting and my roots imbibe no more,
Fell me, and, while I am falling, listen to my crash and roar!
With me then shall go the stories which the ages caused to be,
From the Saxons' early ages through the days of Chivalry;
When I saw the fields around me soaking oft with human blood,
Conflicts waged by greedy nations coming here from o'er the flood;
When I learned the sign of battle in the night so clear and still,
By the glimmering camp-fires burning brightly on the distant hill;

When I saw the knights in armor on their
chargers ride afield,
And the hills returned the echoes when the
brazen bugles pealed.
England, garden thou of warfare, nourished
with the nation's blood!
All thy conflicts I have witnessed through my
days of hardihood.
Nightly would the Dryads gather 'round my
trunk so huge and strong,
Like the Druids 'round their altar told in
story and in song;
But no more I hear the bugle, nor behold the
knight sublime—
They are hurled away forever off the flying
axis, Time!
Then I saw the cities 'round me raise their
spires high in air,
And I often said within me, 'Slowly grows
the world more fair;'
But, alas! when all was gaining, I was losing
day by day,
From the surging, restless progress slow my
comrades passed away.
Where are they? I cry, I shudder; you have
robbed me, let me be!
Use your axe upon another, strike not such an
agèd tree!
I will hurl my limbs upon you, crush your
dwelling with my breath,
In your dreams I'll fall upon you, mock your
agonies of death!

If you cut a notch upon me with your tempered blade of steel,
So again I tell you, leave me, ere my warning words are real!—
Ah, he hears me, every moment, like the years his form recedes,
While my throbbing heart within me on a glorious future feeds!"

SPORTSMAN'S SONG

Awake! arise! the red'ning skies
Tell morning fair is coming,
And hunters we in forest free
Shall hear the partridge drumming.

The crackling logs and barking dogs
Shall greet us on awaking,—
Then ho! for the meal from gun and reel
We soon shall have abaking!

The bounding deer our shouts shall hear
Ere day again be dying,
And many a trout from streams about
Be in our baskets lying.

Then off! away! at break of day,
O'er woodland, hill and valley,—
Our hounds shall track and rifles crack,
As to the chase we sally!

AN OZARK IDYL
THE MARSH MILL WATERFALL
A CHILD'S SONG

My father has a happy world—
  And it is fenced around,
And there are many lovely things
  About my father's ground:

I love the flower garden which
  My mother tends with care,
The roses and the hyacinths,
  So delicate and rare;

I love to see the plowman in
  The furrow plow the field,
I love to roam the meadows where
  The soft grasses yield;

The barns my father's castles are,
  Oh! Many a rainy day
Have Jane and I spent romping and
  A-tumbling in the hay;

I love my gentle little cow
  With hair so sleek and brown,
I milk her at the morning hour,
  And when the sun goes down;

I love the little piggies, too,
  That snort and grunt all day;
I laugh to see their infant fights,
  I laugh to see them play!

And how I love to climb the hills
And hear the wild birds call,
Or sit and hear the music of
The Marsh Mill waterfall:

The wheel goes round, and round, and round,
For many a weary hour,
The farmers' wheat is grinding, and
The miller makes his flour.

A spring of crystal water flows
That feeds the rushing stream,
Down yonder where the valley slopes
And sunbeams rarely gleam:

The hills are high around the spring,
And dense the forests be,
Oh! never have I seen a spot
More beautiful to me!

The miller wears a funny cap
And apron, all of white,
He's busy, busy all the day,
And happy ev'ry night.

He used to make us little bags
And fill them full of meal,
And write our names upon them when
We stood and watched the wheel.

Oh, round, and round, and round it goes
For many a weary hour.
The farmers' wheat is grinding, and
The miller makes his flour.

The miller loves the waterfall
That makes his wheel go round,
The music of the water is
To him a joyful sound.

He told me, every moment,
Ev'ry moment, ev'ry day,
The waters in their falling seem
To sing to him this way:

"I serve thee! Oh, I serve thee!
I serve with all my heart,
With all my strength and days of length
And all my natural art;

"A hundred springs my being is,
Their births in mountains are,
And there I rear my waters clear
To travel swift and far;

"I have no time to tarry here—
I have no time to play,
For my labors are my neighbors—
I serve them night and day.

"A thousand head of sheep and kine,
As many horses, too,
Depend on me, my waters free,
As grass does on the dew.

"I turn for thee, and gladly, too
Thy pond'rous wooden wheel,
With all my strength and days of length
My flowing grinds the meal.

"I feed the little tender sprouts
That frolic on my bank—
The willow's root—a monster foot—
The grasses growing rank.

"A fearful battle over there
It was my fate to see;
And oh, the grief that found relief,
And soothed itself in me!

"And many a weary traveler
Has kneeled upon the bank,—
With clothing torn and features worn
He thanked his God, and drank;

"A purpose God has given me,—
To serve his creatures here;
With all my strength and days of length,
I flow and bring them cheer.

"Forever and forever, O,
My course is to the sea,
A life begun but never done—
My life for others be!"

TWO FALLS I KNOW

The fall of Minnehaha is a thing,
Whose beauty will enthrall the lightsome breast,
As lovely maid when love is at the Spring,
And love's sweet, buoyant spirit gives no rest.
Niagara, Niagara! God voiced thee with a roar!
The thunder and the lightning hardly add
One whit to thy sublimity—no more
Can man desire of thee, for thou art nature mad!

THE VOLCANO

I heard a mighty mountain clear its throat,
I saw it burst with lava and fierce flame,
I felt a trembling, and the crackling note,
And roar of streaming lava to me came;

I saw the heavens darken, and the glare
Of th' wild flames come bursting through the gloom;—
I turned, and saw a city rising fair,
A moment more—I saw the city's doom.

MADRIGAL

Thy sighs are breaths of roses sweet,
  Thy voice, the music of the lyre,
And could my lips thine own but meet
  But once, 'twould solace my desire.

The soft love-light within those eyes,
  Whose darkness matches raven gloss,
Is such, it seems, as angels prize,—
  But mine's the gain, and theirs the loss.

The magic waves that o'er me leap,
  From pulse to pulse, from vein to vein,
When in my hand thy fingers creep,
  Is as the bud's when summer rain

With gentle warmth lightly falls,
  And to the withering flowers yields
The nourishment their beauty calls,
  If they must bloom in bower or fields;

But when the lights are burning low,
  Thy phantom form before me floats,
And love's soft passions gently glow,
  While in mine ears are sweetest notes.

And there my reverie fades and dies,
  The phantom glides away, and night
Steals o'er me, and my drooping eyes
  Await Aurora's car of light!

TO JOHN KEATS

Poor Keats, when Nature made you she for-
got
To put the stiffening in, and you succumbed
To little hurts that stronger breasts feel not:
You died from the flutter of your own ecstasy,
Immortal dream of Beauty, and fine phantasy!

THE FOUR WINDS

The south wind, it warms us,
The east wind, it chills,
The west wind alarms us,
The north wind—it kills!

THE CYCLONE

I am the cyclone,
Fearful and dreaded,
Speed I immeasurably
Swift o'er the country;
I am God's warning
When he is angry!
O'er village and city
I'm sent on his errand,
Dealing destruction,
Death and wild carnage
'Midst a weak people
O'er whom I am master.
Oaks on the hillside,
Lords of their kingdom,
Tremble before me,
Sway, and snap sharply,
And crash to the valley;
Lake, stream, and ocean
Are tost into fury,
Scattering broadcast
Spray to the heavens!
Ships are as feathers,
And fonder before me!
Temples of granite,
Massive and lofty,
Tumble and crumble,
Under me, passing.
I am the wind god,
I am the Terrible,
I am God's warning
He thought and designed me!

FRAGMENT

When I behold the firmament at even,
And see the constellations there divine,
Each star does seem a portal into Heaven,
Through which the light of Paradise does shine.

THE DEATH OF CHATTERTON

And he is dead; the child whom Genius crowned,
And left to Poverty's remorseless will:
Here in this shabby room the corpse was found,—
He called for Death—Death came and all was still.
The priceless manuscripts his mind produced,
In shreds about him lay, unsought, unknown
To heedless millions, whose apathy induced
The violent deed. Too early he had grown
Above the world's mentality, and chose
The unknown state, by desperation driven:
The angel host in unison arose,
Forgave him—and he that fell unshriven,
Beheld the soul arise, and saw it borne to heaven.

TO A BIRD

See that brilliant bird
  Mounting to the tree!
If I knew each word
  It pours out to me,
What a hidden world
  Were to me revealed!
Like a bud uncurl'd,
  That so long had sealed
    Beauty in its fold
    Of exquisite mold.

What joy in thy heart,
  Born of life so free!
Trying thus to part
  In sweet melody!

What is that which thou
  From thy perch so high,
Calleth to my brow?—
  Thoughts which cannot die.

Men may look on thee,
  Longing to know how
They, too, might be free,
  Even as art thou!

But in thee I find
  A spirit spark divine,—
Music of a kind
  That is more than mine,

Brought from some far realm,
  Which I fain would know,—
Such a place, I deem,
  Where good spirits go!

THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD
1849

If thou couldst from a hilltop see
A bivouac of infantry
Encamped upon the plain below
Beneath the moon's soft falling glow—
Recumbent forms in quietude
Around the piles of burning wood,
And not a sound of good or fell,
Except the watchword, "all is well,"
That, like some unexpected sound
That breaks the spell of those around,
And travels on and on until
'Tis echoed from a distant hill:
Those forms aweary, locked in dreams,
(While from each glist'ning rifle gleams
The flashing rays that leap around,
Mocking the fire's dance on the ground)
Know not of danger—should you see
Advancing hosts come o'er the lea,
And hear the bugle in the camp,
Behold the waking and the tramp—
The dead start into life again—
And roar of battle on the plain,
Then thou would'st know how sudden, strange,
Came consternation o'er that range
Of wildest nature, mount and glen,
As yet unchanged by arts of men,
When precious gold, washed from the stream,
First startled man by its fair gleam,
And roused the world from East to West
To sudden motion without rest!

A SONG FROM IRELAND

I come from a land where the shamrock and thistle
Are emblems of love in the homes of the isle,
Where free was my youth as the curlew whose whistle
I heard in the woodlands, o'er copse and defile;
I've kissed the blest stone in our dear castle Blarney,
I've paddled my boat o'er the waves of Killarney,
I've searched the dark chambers of Fingal's vast cave,
I've climbed the high mountain, I've swum the dark wave;
I've scaled the steep peak where the boldest resign,
The wild beast subdued with this dark eye of mine.
My father had castles and riches untold,—
I cared not for them and the life they unfold,
And many a youth who had long sought my heart
Remembers the day when I bade him depart;
I loved but the mountains, the meadow, the sea,
(The roar of the ocean was music to me!)
The shadowy wood and the pinnacled height,
The fast racing waves and the bright stars of night;
And so, all untamed, the sweet days passed away,

But now, far from home, are the raven locks
gray,
And memory nurses the sorrowful strain,—
"Oh! give me my youth and my island
again!"

ANTITHESIS

Should we applaud for that which is not
good?
Should we uproot a weed and call it food?
Should wise men bow their heads unto a
dunce?—
'Twould beat the four winds blowing all at
once!

A PASSION POEM

Oh! canst thou not when night is low,
  And storms are blowing o'er the lea,
Forget thyself a moment, O,
  And let thy thoughts drift back to me?

I lived for thee—I feel, I know
  That thou wert made alone for me,
For all the fires that in me glow
  Were brightened by a look from thee.

And must I dream of other days,
  While living out this life alone,
The while the demon, Memory, plays
  In mock'ry of the pleasures gone?

The bliss that was!—the blasted plight!
  And thou that wert the soul of both!
I see them and thy wedding night—
  The groom, the bride, the solemn troth!

If mine's the pain, is thine the bliss?
  To *me* no second love can be!
No! God will never sanction this,
  Nor free thee of my misery!

MAIDEN'S SONG

I said farewell once on a time
But said the word with pain;
And every day I breathed the word
Until we met again.

The sun came up a hundred times,—
In glory set at even,
I thought of him—I prayed for him
To Mary dear in Heaven.

A ship came sailing o'er the bay,
A ship with treasure laden,
I hailed the ship—he stepped ashore,—
I was a happy maiden!

TO CUPID

O, Cupid, Cupid, why so mean
To pass so hard these hearts between?
Why with such stealth and treachery move,
And sever hearts once locked in love?
Why in and out so blindly fly,
And wound or heal—O! tell me why;
Oh! can it be that Venus gave
Such cruel tactics to her slave?
Or can it be you pleasure find
In acting so?—Ah! you are blind:
O'er streams of life must ripples roll,
But you're the wave that wrecked my soul!

TO A BED

O, little bed
With spread of red,
And many parts of iron about you,
How many a night,
Tired, sick, or tight,
This world were hard, indeed, without you!

The roof above
Of th' old alcove,
Slants over you, O, bed, all downy,
The while I sleep,
In Dreamland peep,
And join the sport of elf and Brownie.

Here, many a night,
In th' pale moonlight,
I've kingly felt in sweet repose,—
No pomp and gold,
But manifold
The bliss the poorest creature knows.

Oft through my head
Old legends sped
Of gallant knights and ladies airy,
And crazy kings
Whose death cry rings
Still in my ears enough to scare me.

You are the spot
Where 'tis our lot,
To rest, to love, to heal, to diet,

Where man's brought in
This world of sin
And ushered to eternal quiet.

On you, O bed
My pillowed head
Has dreamed till it was sick of dreaming,
Or worried deep,
Or planned to reap
Some fickle fortune distant beaming.

O little bed
With spread of red,
I'm drawn to you as to no other,
On you I've had
(World-sick and sad)
My sweetest dream—of God and—mother.

THE VISION OF BEAUTY

I wandered over many a hill
And dragged myself along, until
I rested at the close of day
Beside a woodland, far away,
Where man was seldom known to stray.

And then the radiant evening spread
Her transient splendors overhead:
The moon, that, rising o'er the height,
Plainer and plainer in my sight,
Each moment cast a mellower light,—

Till lastly, when the closing day
Had changed its hue to leaden gray,
She reigned supreme; and lovelier yet,
As when the eye first beauty met,
A sight the mind can ne'er forget.

And there was stillness all about—
No sound of bird, no childish shout;
But all above, and all below,
As dying winds would come and go,
In sleep was nature left to grow.

Dark shadows of the trees around,
Like specters crept upon the ground,
And for a moment, nothing stirred,
Then, scarcely audible, a word
In unknown tongue I feebly heard.

And following quickly in its flight
A figure dressed in snowy white
Floated before me in the air.
Her arms and heaving breasts were bare,
Of which the sculptor would despair.

And for a moment I was filled
With wonder, awe, and strangely thrilled,
My veins with gushing pulses swelled,
As if my death were slowly knelled,—
So strange a scene my fear impelled.

I know not how the minutes went,
For all my thoughts on her were bent;
But now I wonder at it all—
The shadows shrouding like a pall,
And then that low and phantom call.

With many a winning courtesy
She raised the fire of love in me,
She made it glow and fiercely burn,
She made my inner passions yearn,
Like that which dawning love must learn.

But lo! she floated in the air,
And grasped her loosely flowing hair,—
Her drapery vanished in the night,
The goddess form was bared to sight,
Illumined by a flood of light!

O sculptor, with thine art divine,
I see thy masterpiece decline!
O Michael Angelo, thy brush!
A thousand fancies to me rush,—
Such form a saint's resolve would crush!

That face! that form! that figure! all!
Had answered to the highest call;
O, rarest vision, could it be
Thou wert the chosen of the three—
The golden apple went to thee?

O, eyes that tears had never shed,
O, heart that sorrow ne'er had fed,
O, love and beauty manifold,
A seraph wandered from her fold,
Wert thou, wert thou, O heavenly mold.

With throbbing heart the sight I viewed,
And, as a maiden who is wooed,
Afraid to utter thought or sound,
Afraid to mar the stillness round,—
I lay, a prisoner, on the ground.

And then it was oblivion took
Possession of the lonely nook:
The trees around, the moon above,
The vision in that silent grove,
Had disappeared by magic move.

When morning light returned and found
Me lying there upon the ground,
It softly crept beneath mine eyes,
And cut the cord that languor ties,
And woke me from my wild disguise.

ON VISITING PLYMOUTH

And this is Plymouth!—land of Pilgrim love!
The home of Alden and Priscilla fair,
Afar through distant years I see them move,
I see Miles Standish with his "martial air".
Behold the rock, the dark and weathered rock,
Where first they stepped that bleak December day,
Rising alone beside the city's dock,
And far as eye can reach is stretched the lovely bay.

But up the path that leads o'er yonder hill,
Where once the single cannon and the guard
Were stationed, lie their bodies, dust and chill,
Read on th' stones here scattered o'er the sward,
In Latin writ, and in Old English, too,
The curious lines, as quaint as they are old,
Which we must solve, like riddles, to construe,
Of our old English sires, so pious, staunch and bold.

From persecution was their lot to flee,
To lands they dreamed of very far away,
Where they might live and feel that they were free
From sceptered rule and blinded bigotry;
I see them gather and the ship set sail,
I see them driven onward to their fate,—

"The land! the land!"—the eager Pilgrims hail
The land, but frozen land, with little to elate.

Then was a moment when the boldest hearts
Might shrink from lingering in such a clime,
But caprice of a king, of all man's arts
The first and last denounced in prose and rhyme,
Awaited their return. The bleak shore,
However barren, still was freedom's zone,
(When men are *men* they cannot wish for more)
And there it lay, the land they sought, ice-bound and lone.

O you who see the place as it is now,—
A spot of comfort, beauty and delight—
Does there not flash instinctive to your brow
One thought of pity for those Pilgrims' plight?
One tear of sorrow?—Have you not a soul
That rises to the moment of the hour,
And *feels* for them,—embracing here the whole
Of what they were and did—bequeathing us a dower?

The acorn of a mighty oak were they!
The nucleus of a nation! In each breast
The spirit of a lofty purpose lay,
That lived through circumstance the bitterest!

Sickness—famine—warfare! Yet despair
Was not in them a portion of their days—
Theirs was faith and courage that is rare,
Even of Greece and Rome where Time his laurel lays.

Their tale is told—their hardships, joys and loves,
By harps that sang a loftier song than mine,—
By one in whose sweet lines the spirit moves
Of them our country honors for all time:
Their tale is told, and dust are those that made it,
But the bright flame they kindled still survives—
Scene of the drama! City where they played it!
And Plymouth's column rearing, perpetuate their lives!

FRAGMENT

The cold, bright moon shines out tonight
On yonder barren field,
The dew drops sparkle in the light,
And distant objects meet the sight;
But oh, what lies within my breast—
The sorrows manifold compressed,
Can never be revealed.

APHORISM

Be a boy as long as you can,
There's plenty of time to be a man.

CONSTANCY

When first I kissed that lovely face
It seemed that nature and her race
Of fairy artists vied their skill
To make the fairest, and to fill
That single mold with all the good
That makes the charm of maidenhood:
Again I kiss that face today—
Some forty years have passed away,
The brows are knit, the locks are gray,
And round about it wrinkles stray,
The heart has lost its childish play—
The bloom of youth forever gone,
But still, unchanged, my love lives on.

1809—ABRAHAM LINCOLN—1909

O, thou, the child of poverty and care,
If I would make a parallel of thee,
I feel I am not wrong if I compare
To Him thou followed—Man of Galilee:
In lowliness was thy nativity,
Thou noble offspring of the virgin soil,
Thou child of meekness and humility,
And noblest exponent of manly toil.
The care worn face my cheeks the tear-drops soil
When I behold, for thine was fire that burned
To light the world. Thy will, what foe could foil?
Thy purpose, e'en by armies ne'er was turned
From its wise course;—thy fall, a nation's groan:
Thy task for man performed, God took thee for His own.

THE POET'S DREAM

I'll marry my muse some happy day,
A muse most beautiful, jubilant, gay,
We'll live in a castle up so high
The lowest portals look over the sky;
I'll have my papers and pen and ink,
And sit all day in my chair, and think;
I'll spatter the ink o'er many a clime,
And bring it back in the form of rhyme;

I'll sing with the muses and dine with the gods,
And measure my verses in poles and rods!
I'll company keep with the aerials free,
And I will love them until they love me:
I'll kiss their cheeks and plait their hair,
And dance with them on their plain of air,
And lift a cup of nectar cold
As they did in Olympian days of old;
And when with rhyme there is nothing to do
I'll send a loving epistle to you,
And cancel its stamp with a kiss or two!
Oh! a poet ne'er knowing a tear nor sigh,
Will I be in my castle, up in the sky.
The people with glasses on earth below
Will climb a high mountain to look at me, Oh!
And I'll toss them bunches of flowers sweet,
And nice little cakes the muses eat,
Each day my wife will prepare a dish,
Choicer by far than a god would wish,—
Ambrosia, nectar and roses' dew,
And a dash of wine old Bacchus drew
From an antideluvian keg!
Locked in my castle, up in the sky,
Merrily living as time goes by,
I'll pass my days and pen my dreams
Where the moon and the stars flirt with their beams,
And there I'll reap, and there I'll sow,
Nor taste the sorrows of earth below!

THE DESERTED SHIPS

A Sea Tale from the West

"And how is this, my fellow man,
And how, my comrades three,
That I possess such yarn as this
Who never sailed the sea?

"Oh, ho! you wink your weather eye,—
I know its meaning well—
So you believe that I deceive,
No tale of sea can tell?

"Then sit ye down my comrades three,
And hearken to my tale,
How night and day for leagues away,
Unmanned two ships did sail."

He was a rugged Western man
Who came to know the sea,
With eager face he walked apace
Beside his comrades three:

It was a stretch of ocean beach,
The waves did roar and roll,
He fed his eye on breakers nigh,
That stirred his rugged soul.

"Oh, ho!" he cried, "I like the sea,
I like the waves and roar,—
Now sit ye 'round—your nerves I'll sound
With tale ne'er told before."

And they did sit as he did say
Upon the sands and shale,
And there he stood while iced their blood
That made their cheeks to pale.

"And how came I by this? you say —
A man of th' West countree—
Though rough my looks I'm schooled in books,
In tales and historie.

"I got it from my great grandad,
And he from his, I'm told,
They loved the free—they sailed the sea
Where'er its waters rolled.

"It was the good ship *Flying-Fish,*
With three masts pointing high,
As spick and span as any man
E'er sailed beneath the sky.

"And ev'ry man who made her crew
Had vowed a vow on high:
To find that land upon whose strand
Man blessed might live and die.

"Ah, simple minds—ah, foolish men,
That dreamed to happy be,
All free of care in th' enchanted air
Of island in the sea:

"Where suns are warm, and moons are mild,
And gentle breezes blow,
Where men no more desire their shore—
Where lotus flowers grow;

"Utopian land—a fabled isle,
In famed Aegean Sea,
Where ills of Eld have been withheld,
And all earth's misery.

"Ah, well-a-day, and well-a-day,
Those foolish, luckless men!
Bright was the day they sailed away,
But ne'er to land again!

"They saw the golden sun go down
Where long had dwelt their sires;
They said farewell—they hailed the swell
Of sea that never tires.

"They saw the golden sun come up,—
The white-caps rolling far;
Theirs was rejoice with ringing voice,
As th' doomed so often are.

"Far to the south the vessel sailed,
And reached the Afric shore,
They passed the strait—the Mid Sea gate—
They hailed the dusky Moor;

"Far to the south—Calypso's isle,
By Cyprus and by Crete,
Fair blew the wind—far, far behind,
The sky and islands meet;

"But on the tenth day out they spied,
A speck against the sky,
It nearer drew, it larger grew—
They watched with fearful eye.

"And when that thing had neared the ship,
Ah, they were filled with fear—
Right well the crew its meaning knew—
Some dreadful doom was near!

"It was a noxious cormorant—
A foetid, carrion thing,
It sought a mast*—such sign did blast
Those men's fond reckoning.

" 'Oh! woe is ours!' the captain cried,—
He swore a fearful oath—
He drew his gun and fired upon
That bird which he did loathe.

"No sound it made, nor moved at all—
'Twas silent as a trap—
To scare the thing each man did fling
On high his sailor cap.

" 'Thou art a solitary bird,—
I know it by thy beak—
No bird could be thy companie,—
E'en I abhor thy shriek;

---

*During the composition of this poem, to verify myself, I looked up the habits of the cormorant, and by a strange coincidence, came to this: "Its voice is hoarse and croaking, and all its qualities obscene. No wonder, then, that Milton should make Satan impersonate this bird . . . and sit, devising death, on the Tree of Life. Aristotle expressly says the cormorant is the only sea-fowl that sits on trees."

" 'Thou art a harbinger of woe—
A sign all sailors dread—
I will not rest till I am blest
To see thee lying dead.'

"The captain scarce had made his vow,
Than loud the bird did cry—
The frightened crew together drew—
'What's that 'neath yonder sky?'

"Far o'er the sea they saw a sail,
Full ev'ry canvas drew—
They raised the glass—O God, alas!
That ship the *black flag* flew!

" 'Aloft! aloft!—set ev'ry sail!'
The captain's voice rang loud;—
Quick as a fang the sailors sprang—
And manned each mast and shroud.

"Tops—top-gallants—main and jib,
Were spread as ne'er before—
She swung—she dipped—she leaped—she slipped—
Like thing possessed she tore!

"But still was perched above that ship
Which flew before the wind,
That wicked bird—it never stirr'd,
But perched—it seemed it grinned!

"Ah, day on day and night on night,
The pirates chased that bark;
Now near, now far, 'neath sun and star—
By day-light and by dark.

"The hopes of th' one they were high;
The others' ire was, too,
Who cursed and railed as on they sailed,
But close they never drew.

"Still perched that evil cormorant.
The efforts of the crew
To drive away that bird, or slay,
Were vain, and foolish, too.

"They tried by every means, but failed,
That evil bird to slay,
When near the thing it took to wing—
It knew the game to play.

"Hard strained the ship as winds increased,
But high she bore and well,
Until—a crash—quick as a flash,
Down, down the main mast fell!

"The mast the bird had perched upon—
That bird demoniac—
Was snapped and fell—th' exultant yell
Of th' pirates answered back!

"With fearful shriek that frightened bird—
Like ghost in shadows dressed,
Shot through the air toward th' pirates there,
Who near and nearer pressed.

"Can aught escape that crippled be
When pressed full hard and fast?
The hour was come—the crew were dumb—
The battle on at last!

"The pirates overhauled that ship,
But dearly bought the day—
The deck ran red with slaughtered dead
Where man and pirate lay.

"They spared not one; those pirates grim,
With thirst for blood and gore
They cut and slashed—the blood it splashed,
They threw the wounded o'er!

"Oh, God, was there ever a scene
Like this, unjustified?
The pirate crew infuriate grew—
As swift the knife they plied.

And yell on yell, and oath on oath
'Mid clash of steel arose;
And flash of arms of men in swarms,
And shrieks, and groans, and blows!

"The deed was done. The night drew on—
The waves received the slain;
It was not good—this deck of blood—
They sought their ship again."

The Western man, he paused for breath—
"Go on!"—his comrades cried,
"We sit to hear with eager ear."
"Then list," the man replied.

" 'One crowded hour of glorious life',
You've heard the line, my men—
That murd'rous crew—they sought to do
The meaning of it then!

"They lashed their prize beside their ship,
Exultant in their task,
Then back they sprang and loud they sang—
Spread round about a cask:

The Bacchanal

"Fill high the glass—the fight is won!
We sing, who never died—
Their flesh and blood is fishes' food—
We are the ocean's pride;

"Let others toil for what they get,
We win by right of force—
Our home, our grave, the ocean wave—
Our path the trackless course;

"We came not of our own desire—
Why should we toil to live?
By others' blood we gain our food,
What though at times we give!

"Let others mark by deed or line
The bound'ry of their home—
Ours is the free and boundless sea,
Our roof, the azure dome!

"Fill high the glass—the fight is won—
We sing, who never died:
Their flesh and blood is fishes' food—
We are the ocean's pride!

"They sang—they drank—the orgy grew—
Till they were men no more—
A frightful wreck—each stretched the deck—
The rum was running o'er!

"Oh, ghastly scene! ah, horrid scene!
As, one by one they rose—
They cursed—they raved—each face was graved
With terror . . . *What are* THOSE?

"About the deck a host appeared—
The spirits of the dead!
With weird shout they rushed about—
It was an hour of dread.

"The frenzied lot were chased about
Like fishes scared by shark—
They raved, they yelled, by ghosts impelled,
Upon that haunted bark.

"There were two brothers in that crew—
Together always found—
Their minds were one as life went on,
Held by a common bond.

"Of these one fled with horrid shriek
Above, about, below,—
He seemed to see a spirit free
Close in to deal a blow.

"In vain he climbed, he dropped, he ran—
Close on his heels it flew—
With terror crazed, his cutlass raised—
That thing, he stabbed it through!

"Alas! alas! what had he done?
There at his trembling feet,
With bleeding side his brother died;—
He sank with moaning meet.

"Relentless spirits! heaven sent—
They drove them one by one
To walk the plank—they yelled, they sank
For sharks to feed upon:

"Splash—splash—splash!—
As one by one they fell—
The hungry shark arose in th' dark,
And bore them through the swell;

"Splash—splash—splash!—
As o'er the vessel's side—
The yells of th' men were terrible, when
They plunged below and died;

"Splash—splash—splash!
Was e'er a night so grim?
Midst wild alarm the sharks did swarm,
And crunched them, trunk and limb.

"Splash—splash—splash!—
The god of Justice bore
Above that ship with its rise and dip,
Till ev'ry man was o'er.

"And then a deathly silence fell,
Save waters lapping nigh—
Like that which falls in cavern halls
When th' lost have ceased to cry.

"And they, the ghosts of them that died—
Those men the pirates slew—
The task well done, like setting sun
To another world withdrew.

"Then o'er the sea the moon arose,
And lit that place of strife,
But all were gone—the ships, alone,
Gave not a sign of life.

"Oh, was ever a scene so fair,
So silent, beautiful,
Where just before was death and gore
And Justice dutiful?

"Oh, was ever a scene so fair,
On lone and silent sea?
The moon shone red, the vessels sped
In solemn majesty.

"And I am told that to this day
Their hulks are met at sea,
Lashed side by side they drift and ride—
Those hulks a moral be:

The Moral

"Eternal law of righteousness—
God worketh out His will—
No land of bliss on earth there is—
Death follows those that kill."

He was a rugged Western man,
Who came to know the sea—
With eager face he walked apace,
"Farewell, my comrades three."

TO A CHILD

Child of the loveliest,
Symbol of happiness!
Would that thy future could
Always be thus!

Sunshine more radiant
Out of the firmament
Ne'er was than that bursting
Out of thy soul.

Something mysterious,
Stolen from heaven I
Feel creeping over me
When thou art near!

THE POET TO SCIENCE

Keen Science! thy cold heart beats not like
mine;
For mine is warm and does not wound like
thine;
I love to clothe with romance and old myth,
Those things I know of—old ideals and
scenes,
Until I'm lost in Fairyland, and with
My mind ecstatic by this psychic means,
I live in th' fullness of my happiness;
But when thou comest I am all distress!
Thou fillest me with knowledge not desired,—
My soul is touched with truth, of deep im-
press,
My dreams depart, life changes, I grow tired.

SCENE FROM "A SUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM"

Scene

A throne in a bower in the Realm of Bliss. The queen of the Realm seated on the throne, Courtiers, attendants, crowds of fairies and sprites in gorgeous and fantastic attire.

A winged boat bearing Richard and Isabella appears; Comet, the prince of the Realm, in the bow.

Chorus of Spirits, singing.

They have come, they have come,
In a sandal boat,
With wings for oars propelling,
Rising and falling on ev'ry note
Of our voices, rising and swelling.

First Spirit.

We have searched our realm afar,
We have robbed the ocean bed,
We have taken from each star
Countless gems as on we sped.

Second Spirit.

We have made the flowers grow
With a fragrance more intense,
We have caused the streams to flow
With a joyous affluence.

Third Spirit.

We have caused the moon to shine
On our world with softer light,
We have brought the Muses nine
From their famed Parnassian height.

All.

We have given our heart and hand,
Every art that spirits know
To improve this lovely land,
For these mortals from below!

Comet.

My queen, behold them!

Queen.

What have we here?

Comet.

Love-sick mortals from the lower sphere!
I grew a-hungered after such a trip,
And sought the honeysuckle for a sip,
At such an hour when mortals are abed,
And Morpheus puts an end to joy and grief,
I found them, lovesick, sighing for relief,
And brought them hither, all the spirits went
To work to welcome us on joy intent,
And decked your realm with many an ornament!

Queen.

Such sport is rare and past my understanding;
But stop the boat—your couple should be landing.

Comet.

O! spirits, attend!
The bride disembark,
The groom will descend,—
Oh, ho! for a lark!

As the spirits do his bidding, they all begin to sing, Comet alights, too, the boat floats away.

Chorus of Spirits and Fairies.

From the world below,
To our world above,
With your heart aglow,
Fluttering with love,
You have come tonight,
At our brother's calling,
All our world's delight,
Its blessings on you falling!
Thy gown of lilies made,
Thy veil the autumn mist,
Thine eyes with night arrayed,
Thy cheeks with roses kist,
Thy heart's and soul's desire
Is love's eternal fire.

Richard.

Oh! heavenly bliss
What joy is this?
What realm unearthly, Isabel,
Is this, where all these spirits dwell?

Isabella.

Yes; how and where?
This gown I wear
Is not the work of mortal hand,—
You took me o'er my father's land
To spend a happy evening hour—

Comet.

And you are in our spirits' power!

Richard, unheeding.

Methinks through heaven's portals pour
More blessings than I ever sought before
Upon me, and, O, Isabel!
You who have held me off for years,
Now yield without a murmur, my eyes swell
With joy unearthly, blinded with glad tears!

They pace back and forth, seemingly oblivious to the host of spirits around them.

Comet.

Hist, spirits, hist! the charm is working well,
Bring forth the minister and sound the marriage bell.

(*A spirit appears in the garb of a clergyman, an altar with lights or tapers upon it arises in front of the throne, the clergyman approaches the altar, and, impelled by the spirits, the lovers follow. As the minister begins to speak, the marriage bells, in control of impatient spirits, peal forth, the throne and altar vanish, and the spirits depart in all directions.*)

Richard, awakening, alarmed.

Why, Isabel, alas! what hour?
Loud peal the chimes in yonder tower.

Isabella.

O, Richard, we have slept, oh pray
Come, hurry home, 'tis almost day!

Aftermath.

Dreams and love and happy hours,
Heart's desires attaining;
Maidens fair and bridal bowers,
Oh, how joy was straining!

Spirits, that in childhood day
Drive the cares of life away,—
Things impossible to be
This glad night were company.

Who would not a sweet dream have,
When the day is ended,
In a bower where waters lave,
And rose breaths are blended?

'Tis I, 'tis I, 'tis I!
Yes, I would a sweet dream have,
When the day is ended,
With my love and fairies by
Where rose breaths are blended.
Then goodbye to one and all,
Phoebus scales the mountain wall!

WHEN TRUE LOVE CONFESSED

Yon moon tells tales of love and sighs,
Of blushing cheeks, and drooping eyes—
Of that sweet time when last I went
To my dear one with love's intent,
  And trembling, heard her "Yes";
And so I strike the sweetest string
Of my soul's harp wherewith to sing
  Of that time's loveliness:

  The lover's heart that wells with joy,
  The blushing maiden, dimpling coy,
  The warbler, from whose magic throat
  Is poured the rarest music's note,
  The flowers, full of fragrance grown,
  The plain, by Heaven's gard'ner sown,
  The beasts, that revel in the grass,
  The bashfulness of lad and lass,
  Declare by action, word, or way
  The glory of the Springtime day:
On ev'ry thing that breathes and grows
The rarest breath of Heaven blows!

  And thus the time I did caress
  My blushing girl, and heard her "Yes".

WEEP NOT

Oh, weep not, weep not for the wilted rose,
A thing of beauty, it is gone, but those
Whose hearts are hearts of faith
Will find another blows!

DASHING JOHN

Dashing John has come to town,—
He is tall and slender;
Billy Brown
Can knock him down
John's so weak and tender!

Yes, Billy Brown
Can knock him down,
But when it comes to mashing,
John the tall
Can beat them all,
So they call him "dashing."

THE MODERN MAGAZINE*

Lucifer! star of the morning, how thou hast fallen!

A mirror of the present age,
A snob's attention to engage;
I look upon its glowing page,
And turn away in righteous rage.

I see it read on ev'ry hand,—
It spreads its poison o'er the land,
As winds the grains of desert sand
That blights what green might there expand.

A flaunting thing with pictures made;
A literature of common grade,
And with sensation well arrayed,
It goes about—the devil's played.

---

*A few magazines are a real blessing, thanks to the men and women who make them.

THE UNCOUTH BOY

The uncouth boy has come our way,
And he is covered over
With clinging straws of meadow hay,
And sprinklings of sweet clover.

He lives over there,
By the side of the hill,
Where the road makes a turn,
And crosses the rill;

His mother is dead,
And his father 's in bed,—
Sick as a fellow can be!
Of brothers and sisters a dozen there are,
All of them younger than he!

Of learning there isn't a bit in his head,
Excepting the lore of the hills!
Of toil—his forever! but slight the reward,
And many, oh, many the ills!

His pleasure is sought
In the pipe he has wrought
Of the cob from the corn in the field,
His solace is found
In the dark wood around,
Where his troubles to nature's voice yield.

And so runs his life—
It is all he has got—
But never complaint has he;
For he knoweth not of a better lot
Or that such a thing might be!

CONCLUSION

I said unto my soul,
"There is more to think about in this world
Than we can think of;
  Life is too short
  To master an art,
And this world we get only a blink of."

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